

McAlester Army Ammunition Plant

For Immediate Release

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Point of Contact: Mark Hughes/918-916-0667

Limited Boating and Water Activities on Brown Lake

MCALESTER, Okla.--Limited boating on lakes and ponds at McAlester Army Ammunition Plant (MCAAP) is in effect until wildlife resource specialists can implement measures to prevent the introduction of the nuisance species called the zebra mussel. MCAAP has more than 80 ponds and its largest body of water, Brown Lake, holds 650 surface acres of water. Bank fishing is still permitted and a limited number of boats are available from the installation's Moral Welfare and Recreation (MWR) activity for exclusive use on MCAAP's waters.

Research is underway to determine what effect the introduction of zebra mussels would have on MCAAP's ecosystem and water plant facility. This information will be used to determine future fishing and boating policies.

Zebra mussels are invasive freshwater mollusks (clams) that infect water in large numbers, attaching to any hard surface. An adult female zebra mussel can release one million eggs a year during spawning season. When these mussels invade bodies of water they clog power plants, public water intakes and pipes. Routine treatment is necessary and very expensive.

According to the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife (ODW), zebra mussels have limited number of natural predators and eliminating zebra mussels once they are established is not likely on a large scale basis.

Boat owners who frequent known zebra mussel waters should be especially cautious. The mussels attach themselves to, and grow within, water intakes of both inboard and outboard motors. Subsequent restriction of water flow can cause motors to overheat, according to ODW's web site.

To discover which Oklahoma Lakes contain zebra mussels and what you can do to protect your boat and the state's ecosystem go to

<http://www.wildlifedepartment.com/publications/zebra.htm>